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NODIS
AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, US

SUBJECT: MESSAGE TO SADAT ON LEBANON

1. FYI. WE CONTINUE TO BE DISTURBED BY INDICATIONS THAT EGYPTIANS BELIEVE THERE IS SOME SORT OF U.S.-SYRIAN UNDERSTANDING REGARDING SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON (FAHMY'S COMMENTS IN CAIRO 5053) AND THAT U. S. COLLUDING WITH SYRIA TO RESTRAIN ISRAEL AND PERMIT SYRIAN INTERVENTION TO LIQUIDATE PLO IN LEBANON AS QUID-PRO-QUO FOR EXTENSION OF UNDOF (AKHBAR AL-YAWM ARTICLE IN CAIRO 5206). I RECOGNIZE THAT, GIVEN EGYPTIAN PERCEPTION OF LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS, IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TOTALLY TO ALLAY THEIR SUSPICIONS. I BELIEVE WE MUST NEVERTHELESS DO ALL WE CAN TO CORRECT EGYPTIAN MISPERCEPTIONS OF OUR POSITION AND REASSURE THEM OF THE PRIMACY WE GIVE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT AND OUR DETERMINATION ABOVE ALL ELSE TO KEEP THAT RELATIONSHIP FREE OF MISUNDERSTANDING. WITH THESE OBJECTIVES IN MIND, YOU SHOULD CONVEY FOLLOWING ORALLY ON MY BEHALF TO PRESIDENT SADAT THROUGH FAHMY. END FYI.

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2. NOW THAT PROCESS HAS BEEN AGREED UPON BY PRINCIPAL

LEBANESE FACTIONS AND SET IN MOTION FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE, THE LEBANESE CRISIS IS ENTERING A NEW AND HOPEFULLY MORE POSITIVE STAGE, DURING WHICH LEBANESE HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO REGAIN FULLER CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN DESTINY AND TO CONSTRUCT MORE VIABLE SOCIETY WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF AN INDEPENDENT, SOVEREIGN AND UNIFIED STATE THAT PROTECTS BASIC INTERESTS OF ALL LEBANESE COMMUNITIES.

3. WE BELIEVE THIS IS THE TIME TO TAKE A LONGER LOOK AT THE PROSPECTS FOR LEBANON AND HOW THE EVOLUTION OF EVENTS THERE WILL AFFECT OVERALL PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY AND PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE IN THE REGION. IN ARRIVING AT AN ASSESSMENT OF THESE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS, WE WANT TO BE IN CLOSEST TOUCH WITH PRESIDENT SADAT AND FAHMY. WE WILL BE PREPARING A FULL ANALYSIS OF LEBANESE SITUATION AS WE SEE IT FOR AMB. EILTS TO CONVEY TO THEM IN NEXT DAY OR SO, AND WE HOPE TO RECEIVE THEIR OWN LONGER TERM ANALYSIS TO HELP US IN DEVELOPING OUR POLICY APPROACH.

4. OUR STARTING POINT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND REMAINS THAT CLOSE U. S. - EGYPTIAN COOPERATION AND COORDINATION MUST BE THE CORNERSTONE OF U. S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY. WE HAVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO PROCEED ON THE PREMISE THAT PRESIDENT SADAT MUST PLAY THE PREEMINENT LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND LASTING MIDDLE EAST PEACE.

5. OUR OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE IN LEBANESE CRISIS HAS BEEN TO ASSURE THAT IT DOES NOT TRIGGER CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT COULD PLACE ENTIRE PEACE PROCESS IN JEOPARDY. THIS HAS MEANT WORKING FOR OUTCOME IN LEBANON THAT KEPT SYRIA FROM ACHIEVING DOMINATION OVER LEBANON, AVOIDED ISRAELI INTERVENTION, AND PREVENTED DESCENT OF LEBANON INTO TOTAL ANARCHY AND DE FACTO PARTITION WHICH WOULD INVITE MASSIVE SYRIAN AND ISRAELI INTERVENTION AND STRUGGLE FOR INFLUENCE THERE BY MANY CONFLICTING FORCES IN REGION.

6. SO FAR, THE EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN LEBANON HAS AVOIDED ALL OF THESE EXTREMES. WE HAVE KEPT ISRAELIS OUT, HAVE WORKED INCESSANTLY WITH LEBANESE PARTIES TO ENCOURAGE
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INTERNAL POLITICAL SOLUTION ALONG LINES ANNOUNCED BY PRESIDENT FRANGIE IN FEBRUARY IN ORDER NOT TO GIVE PRETEXT FOR GREATER SYRIAN ROLE, AND HAVE GIVEN NEGATIVE RESPONSE ON NUMBER OF OCCASIONS IN RECENT WEEKS TO SYRIAN REQUEST FOR GREEN LIGHT FROM US FOR DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION

ON A LARGE, VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED SCALE. WE HAVE NOT ENCOURAGED EVEN THE LIMITED SYRIAN INTERVENTION OF THE

KIND THAT WE ALL RECOGNIZE HAS TAKEN PLACE, BUT FRANKLY HAVE NOT SEEN WHAT VIABLE ALTERNATIVE WAS AVAILABLE IF WORSE OUTCOME--TOTAL ANARCHY AND PARTITION WITH SERIOUS THREAT TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND INTERVENTION ON MUCH LARGER SCALE--WAS TO BE AVOIDED. WE HAVE IN NO WAY BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT OR GIVEN CONSENT TO SUCH SYRIAN MILITARY ACTIONS--DIRECT AND INDIRECT--AS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. QUITE THE CONTRARY, WE HAVE WARNED AGAINST THEM AT EACH STEP AND HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO CONVEY THE RISKS OF ISRAELI COUNTER-INTERVENTION TO SYRIANS. SADAT AND FAHMY MAY HAVE SEEN MY PUBLIC COMMENT FEW DAYS AGO THAT IN OUR VIEW SYRIAN ACTIONS HAD REACHED THE BORDERLINE. WE HAVE DENIED, PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, RIDICULOUS PRESS REPORTS THAT WE WERE "CLEARING" SYRIAN MILITARY MOVES WITH ISRAELIS. THERE IS ALSO NO TRUTH TO PRESS SPECULATION WE HAVE SEEN ALLEGING THAT UNITED STATES IS "PERMITTING" SYRIAN INTERVENTION AS MEANS OF LIQUIDATING PLO, AS QUID-PRO-QUO FOR RENEWAL OF UNDOF. WE HAVE, IN FACT, HAD NO RPT NO DISCUSSION WITH ASAD ON UNDOF RENEWAL QUESTION.

7. WE HOPE FOREGOING WILL HELP CLEAR UP MISUNDERSTANDINGS SADAT AND FAHMY MAY HAVE REGARDING OUR POSITION ON LEBANESE SITUATION, SINCE IT WOULD CONCERN US DEEPLY IF THEY MISCONSTRUED OUR ROLE. WE WANT TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH EGYPT ON LEBANON AS ON ALL OTHER QUESTIONS. WE HAVE SUPPORTED BUT BEEN UNABLE TO GAIN SUPPORT OF OTHERS FOR IDEAS EGYPTIANS HAVE PUT FORWARD--E.G., PROPOSAL FOR INTER-ARAB FORCE. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY SUGGESTIONS REGARDING WHAT SADAT AND FAHMY WOULD LIKE US TO DO IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE NEED FULLEST POSSIBLE DIALOGUE AS LEBANESE SITUATION NOW ENTERS NEW PHASE, AND WILL ALSO BE CONVEYING OUR FURTHER THOUGHTS AS THEY CRYSTALLIZE.

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8. FINALLY, FOR SADAT'S AND FAHMY'S VERY PRIVATE INFORMATION, WE PLAN SHORTLY TO ANNOUNCE THE NOMINATION OF A NEW AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON AND THE TERMINATION OF AMBASSADOR BROWN'S TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT THERE.

9. WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE SADAT'S AND FAHMY'S VIEWS AS TO WHAT US ROLE SHOULD BE. ROBINSON

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